

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3179

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IR, NL

SUBJECT: DUTCH REACTION TO RECALL OF IRANIAN
AMBASSADOR

REF: (A) THE HAGUE 2086 (EXDIS)

(B) STATE 053308 (EXDIS)

1. SUMMARY: IRANIAN AMBASSADOR DEPARTED NETHERLANDS FOR TEHRAN SUNDAY, MARCH 17. HE TOLD PRESS AT AIRPORT HE WAS LEAVING NETHERLANDS TO UNDERScore SERIOUS DIS-APPOINTMENT OVER WAY IRANIAN STUDENTS HAD BEEN ALLOWED "VIOLATE SANCTITY OF COURTROOM AND MAKE PROPAGANDA." IRAN'S DECISION TO RECALL AMBASSADOR, WHICH WAS HEADLINE NEWS IN ALL DUTCH PRESS MARCH 16, ALSO RECEIVED MAJOR ATTENTION THIS MORNING (MARCH 18). EDITORIAL COMMENT MIXED. CONSERVATIVE TELEGRAAF SUGGESTS GON SEEMS TO BE GOING OUT OF ITS WAY TO ALIENATE OLD FRIENDS, WHILE ALGEMEEN DAGBLAD WARNS PROBLEM SHOULD NOT BECOME POLITICAL FOOTBALL. MOST POLITICIANS HAVE BEEN SILENT ON LATEST DEVELOPMENTS. TEMPTATION TO EXPLOIT DUTCH-IRANIAN IMBROGLIO FOR POLITICAL ADVANTAGE (BY EITHER LEFT OR RIGHT) WILL BE HARD TO RESIST, ESPECIALLY IN MIDST OF PROVINCIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN. SUCH EXPLOITATION WOULD OBVIOUSLY EXACERBATE ALREADY SERIOUS PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

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2. DUTCH PRESS MARCH 18 GAVE PROMINENT PLAY TO IRANIAN

AMBASSADOR FARZANEGAN'S DEPARTURE FROM HAGUE MARCH 17. AT AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE AMBASSADOR, WHO SAID REST OF HIS DIPLOMATIC STAFF WOULD BE FOLLOWING SHORTLY, NOTED THAT HE WAS NOT LEAVING SIMPLY TO PROTEST RECENT EVENTS IN WHICH IRANIAN EMBASSY IN WASSENAAR HAD BEEN OCCUPIED "BUT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THESE EVENTS AND IN ORDER TO EMPHASIZE THE SERIOUS DISAPPOINTMENT ABOUT THE WAY IN WHICH THE ACCUSED HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MISUSE THE LAW COURTS AND MAKE PROPAGANDA FOR THEIR MENDACIOUS CAUSE." THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HIS DEPARTURE DOES NOT MEAN A BREAK IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. "THE EMBASSY REMAINS IN EXISTENCE BUT WILL NOT FUNCTION." A NON-DIPLOMATIC EMPLOYEE WOULD REMAIN AT THE EMBASSY. ASKED WHETHER HIS DEPARTURE WOULD BE TEMPORARY, THE AMBASSADOR DECLINED COMMENT.

3. FARZANEGAN THEN TOOK OFFENSIVE NOTING THAT "SO-CALLED STUDENTS" WHO HAD REVILED SHAH HAD NOT BEEN IN IRAN FOR ALMOST 20 YEARS. HE DEFENDED SHAH AS A "DYNAMIC, PROGRESSIVE AND WELL LOVED LEADER." FARZANEGAN SAID PUNISHMENT GIVEN TO STUDENTS WAS TOO LIGHT IN VIEW VIOLATION OF DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY. HE TERMED DEPORTATION OF SOME DEMONSTRATORS TO GERMANY A FARCE, SINCE MANY OF THOSE DEPORTED RETURNED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY TO AMSTERDAM FOR PRESS CONFERENCE. STUDENTS RESIDENT IN NETHERLANDS RECEIVED LETTER FROM STATE SECRETARY OF JUSTICE WARNING THEM NOT TO ABUSE DUTCH HOSPITALITY.

4. ASKED (MARCH 15) TO COMMENT ON WITHDRAWAL OF IRANIAN ENVOY, LABOR PARTY MEMBER PIET DANKERT, CHAIRMAN OF THE SECOND CHAMBER FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, TERMED IRANIAN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TOTALLY UNEXPECTED AND SAID IRANIAN REGIME HAD NO CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT ABOUT THE LEGAL STEPS TAKEN AGAINST THE DEMONSTRATORS. DANKERT SUGGESTED EMBASSY OCCUPATION WAS NOT REAL REASON FOR FARZANEGAN'S REMOVAL. DANKERT SAID PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL'S COMMENTS ABOUT THE SHAH'S OIL PRICE POLICY LAST OCTOBER COULD ALSO NOT BE REAL REASON SINCE THE AMBASSADOR HAD EXPLANATION THESE COMMENTS FROM MFA. DANKERT OPINED THAT DUTCH OBJECTIONS TO AN IBRAMCO REFINERY ON DUTCH BORDER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WOULD ALSO NOT HAVE LED TO THE SHAH'S DECISION. THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS CHAIRMAN REFERRED SOMEWHAT HOPEFULLY TO EXCELLENT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE SHAH AND THE DUTCH ROYAL FAMILY.

5. IN TV APPEARANCE EVENING MARCH 15 AFTER CABINET MEETING, PM DEN UYL REGRETTED IRANIAN DECISION. HE TOOK LINE THAT GON HAD NO CONTROL OVER WHAT KIND OF

SENTENCE INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY METED OUT AND EXPRESSED
HOPE ISSUE COULD BE RESOLVED. AS REPORTED REFTEL A,
PM SUBSEQUENTLY MET WITH IRANIAN AMBASSADOR MORNING MARCH 16.

6. CONSERVATIVE TELEGRAAF (LARGEST CIRCULATION IN HOLLAND)
GAVE EXTENSIVE PLAY TO IRANIAN DECISION. IN LONG FEATURE
ARTICLE, TELEGRAAF'S DIPLOMATIC SPECIALIST SAID IRAN WAS
ONLY ONE OF THE COUNTRIES DISTURBED BY THE ATMOSPHERE OF
"TOLERATION POLITICS" THAT CURRENT DEN UYL GOVERNMENT
RESPONSIBLE FOR AND CONTENDS COMMUNISTS BEHIND EFFORT TO
DENIGRATE GOOD NAME OF SHAH. TELEGRAAF WAS EXTREMELY
CRITICAL OF KVP JUSTICE MINISTER VAN AGT FOR DECLARING THE
NETHERLANDS WAS "TOLERANT SOCIETY" AND THINGS LIKE THIS
HAD TO BE EXPECTED. TODAY'S LEAD EDITORIAL BLAMES
GOVERNMENT FOR POLICY WHICH HAS ALIENATED ONE OF HOLLAND'S
TRADITIONAL FRIENDS AND COUNTRY VITALLY IMPORTANT IN TERMS
OF OIL, ETC. TELEGRAAF EDITORIALIST CONCLUDES THAT THE
NETHERLANDS WAS HAPPILY ON THE WAY TOWARD TURNING ONE
NATION AFTER ANOTHER IN THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD INTO
ENEMIES. INDEPENDENT ALGEMEEN DAGBLAD, USUALLY ON
CONSERVATIVE SIDE, HAD A FAR MORE NUANCED EDITORIAL
SUGGESTING AUTHORITARIAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN IRAN
PREVENTED THE SHAH FROM UNDERSTANDING HOW DUTCH LEGAL
PROCESS WORKED. WHILE DEFENDING THE INDEPENDENCE OF DUTCH
JUDICIARY, AS HAD PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL, AD POINTED OUT
THAT THE NETHERLANDS AS A SMALL COUNTRY MUST FACE UP TO
THE FACT THAT IRAN IS IMPORTANT AND THAT EVERYTHING
POSSIBLE MUST BE DONE TO HEAL THE RIFT. AD URGED DUTCH
POLITICIANS TO KEEP OUT OF THE AFFAIR AND PREVENT IT FROM
BEING BLOWN OUT OF ALL PROPORTIONS. LEADING LEFT WING
DAILY VOLKSKRANT HAD NO EDITORIAL MARCH 18, BUT ITS
FEATURE CARTOONIST (OPLAND, MOST PRESTIGIOUS DUTCH
POLITICAL CARTOONIST) HAD CARTOON OF SHAH IN DUTCH JUDGE'S
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ROBE. UNDERNEATH WAS "HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY OF SHAH OF
PERSIA IN THE ROLE OF A DUTCH JUDGE." SHAH IS DEPICTED
AS SAYING, "I WOULD HAVE HAD THEM SHOT."

7. COMMENT: SUDDEN DECISION TO WITHDRAW IRANIAN
AMBASSADOR CAME AS COMPLETE SURPRISE. AS CLEAR FROM
REFTELS, GON IS MOST ANXIOUS TO REPAIR RIFT. PRIME
MINISTER DEN UYL'S CONCILIATORY STATEMENT IN TV APPEARANCE
MARCH 15 INDICATES GOVERNMENT WILL DO ALL IT CAN TO DAMP
DOWN CURRENT FUROR. KEEPING ISSUE OUT OF PARTISAN POLITICS,
HOWEVER, MAY BE EASIER SAID THAN DONE. EXTREME LEFT IN
LABOR PARTY AND RADICALS WILL OBVIOUSLY DEPLORE ANY GON
EFFORT TO "APPEASE" SHAH AT PRICE OF TRADITIONAL
DUTCH TOLERANCE, INDEPENDENCE, ETC. CONSERVATIVE
OPPOSITION, WHICH POLLS INDICATE BEHIND LABOR PARTY IN

THE UPCOMING PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS, MAY FIND TEMPTATION TO
MAKE IT A POLITICAL ISSUE TOO GREAT TO RESIST. DESPITE
DOUBTS ABOUT GOVERNMENT'S ABILITIES, IN SOME QUARTERS THERE IS
GENERALLY STRONG SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE OF DUTCH JUDICIAL
SYSTEM. MOREOVER, DUTCH DO NOT LIKE TO BE BULLIED.
GOULD

NOTE BY OCT: DISSEMINATION COORDINATED WITH S/S-O, MR KURZE.

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